

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY EUR/EE:ARTHOMPSON:DJW
APPROVED BY AMBASSADOR SILBERMAN
EUR:JGLOWENSTEIN
S/S: JPMOFFAT

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 015132 TOSEC 010070

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, YO, US

SUBJECT: U.S. NAVAL VISIT TO YUGOSLAV PORT

FOR THE SECRETARY AND SONNENFELDT FROM AMBASSADOR SILBERMAN

1. WHILE MY WASHINGTON CONSULTATION PERIOD HAS BEEN BRIGHTENED BY THE GOOD NEWS THAT WE ARE NOW ABLE TO GO AHEAD ON OFFERING THE TOW ANTITANK WEAPON TO THE YUGOSLAVS, I AM CONCERNED AT YOUR ACCOMPANYING DECISION NOT TO APPROVE THE VISIT TO SPLIT BY THE AIRCRAFT CARRIER SARATOGA AND TWO ESCORTS NEXT MONTH. I HAVE READ THE OPTIONS SPELLED OUT IN THE DEPARTMENT'S ACTION MEMORANDUM TO YOU ON THIS SUBJECT, AND I HOPE I CAN ADD THE NECESSARY ARGUMENTATION TO GET YOU TO RECONSIDER YOUR DECISION.

2. THE ACTION MEMORANDUM WAS INCORRECT IN ONE POINT: THE SHIP VISIT WOULD NOT BE THE FIRST BY AN AIRCRAFT CARRIER. IN FACT, JIM LOWENSTEIN TELLS ME HE WAS ON BOARD THE FIRST CARRIER TO CALL AT A YUGOSLAV PORT -- THAT WAS BACK IN 1952
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AND TITO VISITED THE SHIP. THERE WERE SUBSEQUENT CARRIER

VISITS, AT LEAST THROUGH THE FIFTIES. I CANNOT EMPHASIZE STRONGLY ENOUGH THE POSITIVE IMPRESSION OF U.S. POWER WHICH AIRCRAFT CARRIERS MADE THEN AND WHICH THE SARATOGA WOULD MAKE NOW, AT A TIME WHEN U.S. RESOLVE (IF NOT U.S. STRENGTH)

IS BEING SERIOUSLY QUESTIONED ALL AROUND THE WORLD. IN SHORT, I SEE SUCH A SHIP VISIT TO BE ENTIRELY IN THE U.S. NATIONAL INTEREST AND NOT SOMETHING THE YUGOSLAVS WANT TO HAVE FROM US; INDEED, THEY DO NOT EVEN KNOW THAT WE PLAN SUCH A PORT CALL.

3. IF WE NEED TO UNDERLINE FURTHER OUR UNHAPPINESS WITH THE YUGOSLAVS OVER THEIR CLEARING SOVIET OVERFLIGHTS BOUND FOR ANGOLA -- WHICH WAS EXPRESSED SO STRONGLY IN OUR NOTE OF DECEMBER 24 -- WE OUGHT TO FASTEN ON SOMETHING THE YUGOSLAVS DO KNOW ABOUT AND WANT FROM US BUT WHICH WOULD NOT DO DAMAGE EITHER TO U.S. INTERESTS OR TO THE YUGOSLAVS' DEFENSE POSITION VIS-A-VIS THE SOVIETS. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT OUR NAVAL VISITS TO YUGOSLAV PORTS CONTINUED THROUGHOUT ALL THE PERIOD OF COOLNESS IN OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS FOLLOWING THE SOVIET AIRLIFT ACROSS YUGOSLAVIA DURING THE YOM KIPPUR WAR.

4. I THEREFORE RECOMMEND THAT YOU APPROVE THE SARATOGA VISIT TO YUGOSLAVIA AND AUTHORIZE A DEPARTMENT TELEGRAM TO THIS EFFECT. EUR STRONGLY CONCURS. SISCO

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